United Nations A/AC.198/2018/2

General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 February 2018

Original: English

Committee on Information
Fortieth session
1–11 May 2018
Item 8 of the provisional agenda*
Consideration of reports submitted by the Secretary-General

Activities of the Department of Public Information: strategic communications services

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/90 B, provides a summary of the key advances made by the Department of Public Information from September 2017 to March 2018 in promoting the work of the United Nations to the global audience through its strategic communications services.

The strategic communications services subprogramme, one of three subprogrammes of the Department, which is implemented by its Strategic Communications Division, develops and implements strategies for communicating United Nations messages on priority issues. The Division also manages the Department's network of field offices. In addition, as the secretariat for the United Nations Communications Group and its task forces, the Division works to strengthen the coordination of communications throughout the United Nations system.

The activities of the other subprogrammes of the Department, namely, news services and outreach and knowledge services, are described in separate reports of the Secretary-General (A/AC.198/2018/3 and A/AC.198/2018/4, respectively).

* A/AC.198/2018/1.

18-02168 (E) 220218

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 72/90 B, the General Assembly took note of the reports submitted by the Secretary-General on the activities of the Department of Public Information submitted for consideration by the Committee on Information at its thirty-ninth session (A/AC.198/2017/2, A/AC.198/2017/3 and A/AC.198/2017/4) and requested the Secretary-General to continue to report to the Committee on the activities of the Department.

2. The Department hereby submits the information requested on strategic communications services.

3. The Department's activities in the area of strategic communications services are described in the present report, which includes an overview of the Strategic Communications Division's thematic campaign activities, highlighting its strategic approach; a summary of its communications campaigns on key issues; and a discussion of the activities of the network of United Nations information centres, including their multilingual work.

II. Communications campaigns

A. Social and economic development

4. The Department has used every opportunity to pursue its promotion of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals across its platforms and through global and local media and community outreach, from the high-level segment of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly (New York, September 2017) to the twenty-third Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Bonn, Germany, November 2017), the World Economic Forum (Davos, Switzerland, January 2018), the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum (New York, January 2018), the run-up to the sixty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women (New York, March 2018) and the launch of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development" (22 March 2018) and international observance days, to raise greater awareness of the Goals, which is vital for their realization. In stressing the interlinkages of the Goals, the Department has worked to broaden the use of Sustainable Development Goal branding across the United Nations system and has more closely integrated climate action and sustainable development messaging. To better plan, increase awareness of and promote wider action on those issues, the Department has worked closely with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the Office of the President of the General Assembly and all relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. It also leads a revitalized Sustainable Development Goals strategy hub for external and internal partners and the United Nations Communications Group and its dedicated task forces on the Sustainable Development Goals and climate change.

5. To help bring diverse views from civil society to the United Nations, a Sustainable Development Goals media zone was set up during key moments. At the high-level segment of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, the media zone provided a dynamic space for the live broadcast of panel discussions and interviews that allowed participants and the general public to engage directly in conversations about sustainable development. The media zone featured 64 panels and over 220 speakers from more than 50 countries. Sixty-three clips featured on webcasts

garnered 10,257 live video views. Conversations at the media zone using the hashtag #SDGLive reached approximately 232,276 people on social media. The Department also promoted messaging on the Sustainable Development Goals from the World Economic Forum and during the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum.

6. The Department continued to update its website promoting sustainable development (www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/) The site provides easily accessible information on the Goals as well as downloadable products geared to help individuals engage in sustainable activities.

7. In addition to the main United Nations social media accounts, the Department promoted the Sustainable Development Goals through the dedicated @GlobalGoalsUN accounts, which continued to grow. At the end of 2017, the GlobalGoals Facebook account had 239,000 followers (an increase of 68,000 from 2016), and the Twitter account had close to 240,000 followers (an increase of nearly 40,000 from 2016). Since its launch in 2015, the "SDGs in Action" mobile app, now available in the six official United Nations languages, has been downloaded more than 60,000 times, showing a growing level of engagement with the Goals. In 2018, more innovative features will be built into the app to continue to increase its popularity.

8. The United Nations information centres played a key role in implementing and monitoring the impact of campaigns related to the Sustainable Development Goals. They worked closely with country teams to ensure that communications were coherent and strategic, adapting the global United Nations campaigns and messages to local contexts and languages. To that end, they undertook a wide range of advocacy and awareness-raising activities, targeting different audiences and diverse sectors and creating both digital and traditional products.

9. The Department, working together with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the European Union, developed, coordinated and implemented the strategy for the launch of the European Union-United Nations Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls during the high-level segment of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly. The Department and partners promoted the multi-year initiative as essential to the achievement of Goal 5 and will continue to promote the initiative in 2018.

B. Climate change

10. The Department focused its climate change communications on the need for universal ratification and accelerated implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, using positive messaging that stressed progress as well as the need to do much more. By using social media and videos and integrating climate messaging into many other issues, the Department provided communications support for key meetings held by the Secretary-General with world leaders and representatives of civil society during the seventy-second session of the General Assembly, as part of a longer-term effort to mobilize action on climate change. A multimedia communications team that was deployed to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in November supported the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other relevant agencies by promoting examples of climate action from around the world. The Department is working with United Nations system partners on developing a new system-wide communications strategy

on climate change aimed at energizing the climate action agenda in advance of the Secretary-General's climate summit, to be held in 2019.

C. Human rights

11. To raise awareness of basic human rights and to mobilize public action, the Department worked closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to launch a year-long campaign to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in 2018.

12. As part of the campaign, the Department in April rolled out its participatory "Add Your Voice" video project, inviting people around the world to record themselves reading an article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in their native language. By the end of 2017, the project had collected over 2,000 videos in more than 50 languages from over 70 countries. A number of information centres and United Nations offices, including in Armenia, Czechia, Georgia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Myanmar, Pakistan, South Africa, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, contributed to translating and proofreading or recording articles of the Declaration.

13. The Department continued to contribute to commemorating United Nations observances. For Human Rights Day (10 December), the Department co-organized with OHCHR two events at United Nations Headquarters: the launch by the Secretary-General of the campaign for the seventieth anniversary of the Declaration, featuring the President of the General Assembly and two former High Commissioners for Human Rights, and a special event featuring an actress impersonating Eleanor Roosevelt speaking about the drafting of the Declaration. On social media, #DiaDeLosDerechosHumanos was the top trending hashtag on Twitter worldwide in Spanish, while #HumanRightsDay was the third most popular. The Department also promoted an emoji in 10 languages for #HumanRightsDay and a question-and-answer session on Twitter with the High Commissioner that generated 12,000 user interactions. The Department launched two new editions of the Declaration as printed booklets in the six official languages of the United Nations. Special events and outreach activities on Human Rights Day were organized by information centres in various locations, including Antananarivo, Dakar, Islamabad, Jakarta, Lima, Lusaka, Mexico City, Moscow, Ouagadougou, Panama City, Port of Spain, Tehran and Yerevan.

14. On genocide prevention, the Department in September promoted the General Assembly's informal interactive dialogue on the report of the Secretary-General on the responsibility to protect through a media advisory and live webcast and designed a printed version of the Secretary-General's Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence That Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes. It also designed the visual identity for the seventieth anniversary, in 2018, of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. For the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of This Crime (9 December), the Department worked with the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide to launch an appeal for the universal ratification of the Genocide Convention and to raise awareness on social media and through the dedicated website in the six official languages of the United Nations.

15. The Department is working closely with the Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the United Nations to organize the annual commemoration of the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda in early April, as well as student

briefings and other outreach activities to increase awareness of the lessons learned from Rwanda.

16. The tenth anniversary, in September, of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was promoted on social media through an emoji for #WeAreIndigenous and a question-and-answer session on Twitter with indigenous experts, including the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, a member of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and a member of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, among others, who answered questions from the general public.

17. During the period under review, the Department also promoted a round-table discussion on the linkages between the Sustainable Development Goals and human rights, facilitated a workshop on strategic communications for human rights advisers and briefed multiple student groups on human rights.

18. The Department continued to promote the International Decade for People of African Descent by providing informational material, conducting outreach and organizing special events. In November it supported the OHCHR-organized regional meeting on people of African descent in Europe, Central Asia and North America, held in Geneva, with media outreach and promotional material, including an exhibit and a short video about the meeting. The Department also facilitated the production of a promotional video on the Fellowship Programme for People of African Descent and a documentary on Afrodescendants in Portugal to air as part of the UN in Action series. At United Nations Headquarters, during Black History Month, in February, the Department organized a screening of the documentary *Familiar Faces/Unexpected Places — A Global African Diaspora* by anthropologist Sheila Walker; on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March), the Department co-organized with OHCHR an event on the contributions, achievements and challenges of people of African descent.

19. The Department continued to disseminate information pertaining to dialogue among civilizations and the culture of peace, and organized or supported observances aimed at promoting messages of peace, human rights, respect for diversity, non-violence and tolerance. In addition to the above-mentioned international days and activities, the Department promoted messages of social inclusion and equality on International Day of Democracy (15 September), focusing on conflict prevention.

D. Special information programme on the question of Palestine

20. As part of the General Assembly-mandated special information programme on the question of Palestine, the Department held an international media seminar on peace in the Middle East on 5 and 6 October at the Vienna International Centre in cooperation with the Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue and with the support of the United Nations Information Service in Vienna. Discussions focused on themes related to the Israel-Palestine conflict, including the quest for peace in the Middle East and the impact of 50 years of occupation on future prospects; empathy as an alternative way of seeking peace; media narratives and public perceptions from Israeli and Palestinian perspectives; and the conflict through the lens of international media. The meeting brought together diplomats, current and former policymakers, journalists, academics, researchers and media experts from Austria, Germany, Israel, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Palestine, among others.

21. The Department organized its annual training programme for Palestinian journalists from 30 October to 1 December, including four weeks at Headquarters and one week in Washington, D.C. Ten Palestinian journalists from Jordan, Lebanon, Gaza, Jerusalem and the West Bank participated in the exercise, bringing the number of journalists who have benefited from the training programme since its establishment in 1995 to 190. They attended meetings with senior United Nations officials, including the Secretary-General, diplomats, government officials, academics and representatives of non-governmental organizations and think tanks. The group visited major media organizations, such as the New York Times, CNN and BBC, as well as YouTube and Google News, among others. The journalists also attended a hands-on training course taught by professional trainers that focused on multimedia and digital tools.

22. The Department worked closely with the Department of Political Affairs to provide communications support for events that were organized at Headquarters to observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (29 November). These included a special meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, followed by the opening of an exhibit and the holding of a cultural event dedicated to the theme "The Palestinian people: everlasting roots, infinite horizons". United Nations information centres and offices around the world organized various activities in commemoration of the Day, including in Antananarivo; Canberra; Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania; Geneva; Jakarta; Lusaka; Mexico City; Nairobi; Rabat; Pretoria; and Vienna.

E. Decolonization

23. The Department continued to promote decolonization through its various platforms, in close collaboration with the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political Affairs. This included hosting and updating the United Nations and Decolonization website in the six official languages.

F. New Partnership for Africa's Development

24. Through its magazine *Africa Renewal/Afrique Renouveau* and the Africa Renewal website in Chinese, French and English, the Department promoted the work of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union on the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.

25. To help raise awareness of and support for economic development and peace and security in Africa, the Department promoted the aims, priorities and achievements of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Planning and Coordination Agency and its African Peer Review Mechanism. In the December issue of the magazine, the Department published articles under the banner "Bridging Africa's inequality gaps" and looked in detail at the widening wealth gap and existing opportunities in the education and health sectors. The magazine also published an interview with the Chief Executive Officer of the NEPAD Agency on a new continent-wide initiative to create jobs.

26. In partnership with the African Union, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Department in September co-organized an African Union dialogue, which brought together officials

from the African Union, the United Nations, permanent missions of African countries to the United Nations, Africans in the diaspora and academicians to explore the continent's opportunities and how they can be harnessed and maximized for Africa's growth and development, as well as for the maintenance of peace and security.

27. To inform journalists of the work of the United Nations on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Department in September organized an African media round table for journalists from Africa covering the General Assembly and those based in the United States who cover Africa.

28. In October, during Africa Week, held on the margins of the General Assembly's special debate on Africa, the Department organized various media activities to publicize the work of NEPAD, the regional commissions and the African Union, including press conferences, one-on-one interviews and briefings with senior United Nations officials.

29. As part of its outreach efforts, the Department developed a website entitled "Africa at the UN General Assembly" (www.un.org/africarenewal/general-assembly) and populated it with official speeches, statements and activities of African leaders during the 2017 general debate.

30. The syndicated news features service of *Africa Renewal/Afrique Renouveau* continued to expand in 2017. Between August and December, 50 of the magazine's articles were republished in both English and French 360 times in more than 200 media outlets in Africa and around the world, including in Australia, Barbados, Denmark, Egypt, France, Ghana, Haiti, India, Italy, Nigeria, Poland, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom and the United States.

31. Social media accounts showed significant growth (see table below). For example, between 1 August and 20 December, the number of followers of the magazine's Twitter accounts rose by 13.81 per cent for French and 3.48 per cent for English.

Social media statistics for *Africa Renewal/Afrique Renouveau*, 2016–2017

Platform	*As at December 2016*	*As at December 2017*	*Percentage increase*
Twitter (followers)			
@africarenewal	89 229	96 937	10.8
@ONUAfrique	56 000	69 595	12.4
Facebook (likes)			
Africa Renewal	8 020	9 570	11.9
Afrique Renouveau	3 260	4 244	13.0

32. Similar growth rates were registered in the number of subscribers to the Africa Renewal e-newsletter, which provides a brief overview of new content on the magazine's website.

G. United Nations peace operations

33. The Department continued its close cooperation with the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations, Field Support and Political Affairs to promote and backstop United Nations peace operations, including through participation in the work of various thematic and country-specific integrated task forces and working groups led by the

Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political Affairs on Colombia, Iraq, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, among others.

34. The Department, jointly with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in January launched a multilingual multimedia campaign entitled "Service and sacrifice" to build greater public recognition of the individual service and sacrifice of peacekeepers from troop- and police-contributing countries. The campaign focuses on individual stories of peacekeepers that demonstrate acts of courage, sacrifice or compassion, with multimedia packages distributed through global and local channels. The campaign includes videos, social media content and print and audio stories. The first phase of the campaign is laying the foundation for a broader strategic communications initiative on the "value of peacekeeping". The Department has worked with United Nations information centres, peacekeeping operations and other partners to promote this campaign.

35. When Tanzanian peacekeepers were attacked in December in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Department worked with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the information centre in the United Republic of Tanzania and the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, to highlight the sacrifices of the peacekeepers through videos, social media and outreach to media, in particular in the United Republic of Tanzania.

36. The Department continued to work with United Nations system partners both at Headquarters and in the region to promote better and wider understanding of the political efforts of the United Nations and its humanitarian response in the Syrian Arab Republic and neighbouring countries and to issue the weekly update entitled "Syrian crisis: United Nations response" to provide information and guidance on the latest United Nations activities to address the Syrian crisis.

37. The Department covered the activities of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen on various multilingual platforms and disseminated to media in New York and globally, through its information centres, communications materials produced by the United Nations country team in Yemen and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

38. The Department prepared a communications action plan in support of the closure of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti in October to highlight what the Mission had achieved and to emphasize how the United Nations would continue to support Haiti. As part of the planning team for the new United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), the Department ensured that communications and public information needs were reflected in the planning process. In addition, the Department launched the MINUJUSTH website and social media platforms and, together with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, supported the Mission with multimedia activities during its first weeks of operation.

39. The Department provided support to the communications team of the United Nations Mission in Liberia in connection with the Mission's planned closure in March. This included sending a staff member to Liberia to prepare a communications and implementation plan to communicate locally and globally on the work and achievements of the Mission and to explain why it was closing.

40. As a core member of the planning team for the United Nations Mission in Colombia, the Department supported the Mission's communications efforts as it closed down in September to highlight the fact that the Mission had fulfilled its mandate. It further supported the public information team with the opening of

the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia the same month, setting up the website, advising on the use of the social media platforms and liaising with the Spokesperson of the Secretary-General.

41. In addition, the Department, working in cooperation with the United Nations peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Lebanon, Liberia, Mali, the Sudan, South Sudan and Abyei, as well as relevant information centres, conducted outreach to media in troop- and police-contributing countries on numerous occasions to promote the work of those peacekeeping missions.

42. In October, in partnership with the Department of Field Support and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department led the migration of the peacekeeping website (peacekeeping.un.org/en) to a new content management system; the redesigned website made for an improved user experience. The Department has continued to maintain the website, in close collaboration with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, in all six official languages. This has included the monthly provision of mission facts and figures, fatality statistics, information about troop contributors and various fact sheet updates.

43. The Department's role in coordinating crisis communications was again underscored by its chairing of the United Nations system-wide meeting at Headquarters on the humanitarian crisis involving the refugees from Myanmar. As the Rohingya crisis began to unfold, the Department in September established an inter-agency communications group to support United Nations communications and ensure the coherency of key messages. The Department's field offices have also been at the centre of crisis communications. Information centres in Bangladesh, Mexico, Myanmar and Trinidad and Tobago have been leading or supporting United Nations system crisis communications after devastating hurricanes and earthquakes, as well as during the Rohingya refugee crisis. Following the earthquake in central Mexico in September, the information centre in Mexico City reached over 7 million people through Twitter and Facebook messages.

H. Zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse

44. The Department has continued to implement and revise the Organization's communications strategy for combating sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel in cooperation with the Office of the Special Coordinator on Improving the United Nations Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, the Victims' Rights Advocate, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support and other United Nations entities. In September the Department designed and implemented a communications plan for the high-level meeting on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse that included informational banners, posters and signs. The Department has regularly updated the system-wide sexual exploitation and abuse website and arranged media briefings for the Special Coordinator.

I. Counter-terrorism

45. The Department continued to promote the counter-terrorism activities of the United Nations system, as well as the priorities of the Secretary-General outlined in his Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

46. The Department chaired the Working Group on Strategic Communications and supported the development of its workplan, mapping ongoing and new projects of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre related to strategic communications and the media and those of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force.

47. As a member of Working Group on Supporting and Highlighting Victims of Terrorism, the Department coordinated the production of a documentary, *Surviving Terrorism: Victims' Voices*, on the survivors of the Norway terrorist attack of 2011 as part of an Office of Counter-Terrorism project on amplifying the voices of victims of terrorism. In collaboration with the Office of Counter-Terrorism, a screening of the documentary and a round-table discussion on the resiliency of victims was organized at Headquarters in November. Furthermore, the Department conducted interviews in January with victims and representatives of victims' associations during an Office of Counter-Terrorism conference held in Accra, to be featured on the United Nations Victims of Terrorism Support Portal.

J. Migrants and refugees

48. During the period under review, the Department provided communications support to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration during the consultative phase of the development of a global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration. This included producing social media content and organizing media interviews for the Special Representative in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Beirut, London and New York. The Department developed the branding and logo for the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

49. In the second phase of the intergovernmental process to adopt a global compact for migration, the Department, including a team from the information centre in Mexico City, provided communications support to cover a stocktaking meeting held in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, in December; produced a video explaining the complex aspects of migration; drafted press releases and multilingual content for online platforms; coordinated media interviews for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration and other senior United Nations officials; and updated and created content for the refugees and migrants website.

50. The Department in January globally promoted the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Making migration work for all" (A/72/643), both through information centres and in New York, in particular by coordinating two press briefings with the Special Representative, including one conducted remotely with journalists in Europe, hosted by the information centres in Brussels, Geneva and Vienna. Working with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Department produced new infographics to highlight facts about and the benefits of migration, which were shared with information centres with the intent that they be broadly disseminated.

51. United Nations information centres continued to promote the "Together" campaign during the reporting period, establishing a wide range of partnerships with international institutions, civil society and the private sector and coordinating a global series of events to inspire action at the local level.

52. In September the information centre in Canberra, jointly with a local non-governmental organization, organized a seminar to empower women from migrant and refugee backgrounds to acquire new professional skills.

53. The information centre in Beirut in September produced an activity booklet for Lebanese children about the "Together" campaign and an animated movie, broadcast

on local television, to counter negative narratives about refugees and migrants living in Lebanon.

54. In October, working with partners from the United Nations system, the information centre in Washington, D.C., organized a presentation on migrants and refugees to one of the largest African-American church groups in the United States, with more than 2 million members.

55. Other information centres worked with the International Organization for Migration to promote the Global Migration Film Festival, including the information centre in Brussels, which organized film screenings in Sweden in October and Finland in November.

III. Information centre services

A. Multilingualism

56. The United Nations information centres communicate with local audiences in their languages for greater impact and reach, publishing information in 84[1] languages and producing, translating or recirculating press releases, fact sheets and other information from Headquarters and local United Nations system entities. The information centres produce newsletters in 11 languages on a weekly, monthly, bimonthly or quarterly basis.

57. By January the information centres had translated the Sustainable Development Goals, including the icons, into 61[2] languages. For example, the information centre in Moscow translated the Goals into Chechen, Mari, Tatar and Yakut, potentially reaching more than 5 million people in their native languages.

58. The information centres in Brussels and Port of Spain teamed up to produce information materials in Dutch on key United Nations issues. To reach its Dutch-speaking social media audience of more than 250,000 people, the information centre in Port of Spain produced short videos about the Sustainable Development Goals featuring Surinamese students and parliamentarians.

59. Of the 59 operational information centres, 33 employ local languages on their websites. The information centres also use local languages in their social media accounts. There are 69 Facebook accounts, of which 17 are in local languages; 68 Twitter accounts in 24 local languages; and 39 YouTube channels in 11 local languages. The information centres also use other social media platforms, such as

[1] Afrikaans, Akuapem Twi, Armenian, Asante Twi, Bafut, Bangla/Bengali, Bangwa, Basaa, Belarusian, Bemba, Chechen, Czech, Dagaare, Dagbani, Dangbe, Danish, Dioula, Dutch, Ewe, Ewondo, Fante, Filipino, Finnish, Frisian (Frysk), Fufulde (Burkina Faso), Fufulde (Cameroon), Ga, Georgian, German, Gonja, Greek, Gumalcema, Hausa, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Kaonde, Kazakh, Kiswahili, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Malagasy, Mari, Moore, Ndebele, Norwegian, Nyanja/Chinyanja, Nzema, Persian, Pidgin English, Polish, Portuguese, Quechua, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Shona, Shupamum, Sinhala, Siswati, Slovak, Slovene, Swedish, Tamazight, Tamil, Telugu, Tonga, Tsonga, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Urdu, Uzbek, Venda, Wolof, Xhosa, Yakut, Yoruba and Zulu.

[2] Afrikaans, Armenian, Bafut, Bangla/Bengali, Bangnwa, Basaa, Bemba, Chechen, Czech, Dioula, Dutch, Ewondo, Filipino, Frisian (Frysk), Fulfulde, Georgian, German, Greek, Gulmacema, Hausa, Hindi, Igbo, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Kaonde, Kiswahili, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Mari, Moore, Ndebele, Nyanja, Persian, Pidgin English, Polish, Portuguese, Quechua, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, Shona, Shupamum, Sinhala, Siswati, Tamazigh, Tamil, Tatar, Telugu, Tonga, Tsonga, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Venda, Wolof, Xhosa, Yakut, Yoruba and Zulu.

Aparat, Flickr, Flipboard, Google+, Instagram, LinkedIn, Livestream, Periscope, Pinterest, Slideshare, Snapchat, Telegram, Tumblr, Vimeo, Vine and VK, in addition to conducting digital outreach activities through text-messaging services in remote areas with low Internet coverage.

B. Strengthening United Nations information centres by providing strategic support, enhancing capacities and building synergies

60. The Department is reviewing the operational work and structure as well as the overall focus of its field offices to ensure that they remain effective in the rapidly changing global communications environment. The Department has identified areas for rationalization and cooperation and is creating stronger synergies among its centres, with larger offices providing support to information centres in their region. Shared languages, the pooling of expertise and capacity and the redistribution of resources where feasible help to ensure the efficient use and maximum impact of the centres.

61. In the context of ongoing discussions about the reform of the United Nations development system, the Department has been working with the Office of the Deputy Secretary-General, the United Nations Development Group and resident coordinators on how to optimize the contribution of the Department and its information centres to joint and integrated strategic communications.

62. In 2017, the Department prioritized the training of information centre staff to build their sustainable development, social media and multimedia skills, focusing on online instructor-led courses to ensure efficiency and geographical diversity. In total, 122 information centre staff members were trained.

63. This included training by the United Nations System Staff College on the 2030 Agenda, the review process and follow-up framework and the role of the Organization in supporting national implementation, as well as custom online training on social media for 50 information centre staff from around the world.

64. In November the Department brought together officers from national information offices in countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States and Eastern Europe for a workshop in Vienna that was focused on strengthening their digital storytelling skills and increasing regional collaboration.

65. To prepare for the deployment of Umoja in field offices, the Department organized workshops for administrative focal points from its information centres in the Americas and Asia.

66. The Department continued to increase its interaction with information centres on programmatic, administrative and financial topics, as well as on training, through cost-effective online meetings. In 2017 it held 82 live briefings (54 programmatic, 18 administrative and 10 training), reaching more than 1,600 participants, including journalists and members of the United Nations country teams and communications groups (an increase of 60 per cent compared with 1,000 participants in 2016). Recent sessions focused on crisis communications, United Nations development system reform, the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, briefings by the Spokesperson of the President of the General Assembly and discussions with the Department's Under-Secretary-General. Increasingly, information centres are also hosting online sessions, including for the purpose of engaging with other centres or with United Nations communications groups in the region.

C. Working with United Nations country teams and system entities

67. The United Nations information centres work in close collaboration with country teams and resident coordinators to ensure coherent and strategic messaging of United Nations issues and priorities, including of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. They act as brokers for the communications needs of agencies and adapt global United Nations campaigns and messages to the local context. Guided by the concept of communicating as one, many take the lead in developing communications strategies and campaigns through the local United Nations Communications Group for joint observances, initiatives and online platforms, outreach to target audiences and promotion of activities of country team members. They also provide support for visits of senior United Nations system officials.

68. In addition to leading communications activities of local United Nations system offices in their respective regions, the offices located in Brussels, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi provided strategic communications and media support to the United Nations team in Brussels and the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. They lead local communications groups, arrange speaking engagements, handle media accreditation for United Nations conferences and organize press conferences. In Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, the offices manage visitor services and provide guided tours in the six official languages of the United Nations, as well as in Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Czech, Dutch, German, Hungarian, Italian, Kiswahili, Portuguese, Romanian, Serbian and Slovak, reaching more than 185,000 visitors in 2017.

69. The United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe, located in Brussels, supports the communications activities of the United Nations in 22 countries in 13 languages and partners with European Union entities. The Centre ensures coherence in messaging and collaboration among United Nations entities in Europe by convening United Nations Communications Group meetings regularly in Brussels, Bonn and Paris and leads common, multilingual digital outreach for the United Nations entities in Brussels and Bonn. In June the Centre led digital outreach on behalf of the United Nations at the annual European Development Days event, the European Commission's primary forum on development. The Centre seeks to strengthen the vital partnership of the United Nations with European Union institutions, giving visibility to public information campaigns on common values such as the "Together" campaign, the Spotlight Initiative and human rights. In 2017 the Centre designed and produced an online board game to promote the Sustainable Development Goals to young people, a priority target audience. The game has been produced in English, French, Dutch, German, Greek, Spanish and Chinese, with versions in Italian, Portuguese and the five Nordic languages expected to be available by February 2018. Other information centres, including those in Kyiv and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, are translating the game, which will be added to the website www.go-goals.org.

70. The United Nations Information Service in Geneva provides multimedia, radio, press, television, visitor services and webcast support to the United Nations Office at Geneva. The Service provided coverage of the United Nations conferences on Cyprus and the Syrian Arab Republic, meetings of the human rights bodies and meetings on disarmament. In 2017, the Service produced close to 1,000 press releases, 2,500 television features and 520 radio stories. The Service now has 500,000 followers on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram combined, and 1 million viewers on Flickr. The Service hosted 360 events for more than 1,000 journalists, co-organized the United Nations Geneva Open Day for 14,000 visitors and organized about 100 outreach and

educational programmes, including *Cine-ONU* film screenings and other events to commemorate international days and observances.

71. The United Nations Information Service in Vienna, which works with Vienna-based United Nations system offices, continued to promote awareness of United Nations activities and concerns in Austria, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia. The Service worked with the United Nations Communications Group in Vienna to showcase visuals and quizzes about the Sustainable Development Goals across the city's public transportation system, reaching 730,000 people daily for one week in September. In December, it also welcomed to the Vienna International Centre a group of young Slovaks who won a short film competition on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for students aged 10 to 20 years.

72. The information centres worked with United Nations system entities in many other ways, namely:

(a) The information centre in Rabat provided strategic advice and media support to the symposium concerning the follow-up to the Rabat Plan of Action on preventing incitement to hatred, held in Rabat in December, co-organized by the Government of Morocco and OHCHR. It also supported the Alliance of Civilizations for its PEACEapp workshop in Tangiers for young people, including refugees and immigrants, to create digital games on social issues to facilitate intercultural dialogue;

(b) In October the information centre in Cairo initiated and coordinated the production of a digital photo exhibition, with captions in Arabic and English, on the country team's work in Egypt, with a focus on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) In September the information centre in Lima promoted the Prize for Girls' and Women's Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which was awarded to a Peruvian non-governmental organization for its project to empower girls from rural areas through quality science education;

(d) The information centre in Warsaw provided support to the Examinations and Tests Section of the Department of Management by administrating the young professionals programme competitive examination to Polish nationals residing in the country;

(e) In October the information centre in Rio de Janeiro created 50 social media cards and subtitled 20 short videos for a joint digital campaign of the country team that highlighted the work of the 21 United Nations system offices in Brazil, engaging more than 1.5 million people by generating 2,000 shares, 48,000 likes, 655,000 video views and nearly 2 million page views across digital platforms of the United Nations in Brazil;

(f) To enhance coherence, consolidate resources and avoid duplication, an increasing number of centres are merging the information centre and the United Nations country team websites and social media platforms. The information centre in Buenos Aires, for example, which manages the United Nations Argentina website (www.onu.org.ar/) and social media platforms, established editorial guidelines, produced original content and curated the work of other United Nations agencies. In 2017, the number of its followers on Twitter and Facebook increased by 30 and 50 per cent, respectively, and the number of Instagram followers grew by 240 per cent. Human-interest stories generated the highest number of views and the greatest level of interaction;

(g) Similarly, the information centre in New Delhi manages the merged website and social media accounts of the United Nations in India. It also created a

joint communications team with the Office of the Resident Coordinator and UNDP communications staff that is managed by the Director of the information centre;

(h) Information centres continued to provide strategic communications advice and media support during visits of more than 250 high-level United Nations system officials and delegations in 2017. The information centres work in close coordination with the Office of the Spokesperson of the Secretary-General, especially during visits by the Secretary-General, as well as with Member States and local media, to maximize the impact of such visits. Information centres also provide support for visits to their country or region by members of the Security Council. The information centre in Ouagadougou, for example, promoted the visit of Council members to the Sahel in October by mobilizing national and international media and coordinating interviews and press statements by Council members.

D. Partnerships

73. The information centres continued to forge partnerships to build support for and understanding of the work of the United Nations at the local level. In addition to traditional partners, such as Governments, civil society organizations, media and educational institutions, information centres are increasingly engaging with the creative community, cultural institutions, sports associations, faith-based groups and the private sector to raise awareness of key United Nations issues for greater results and impact.

74. To commemorate Human Rights Day jointly with the European Union, the information centre in Islamabad, numerous embassies, the Pakistan National Council of the Arts and the Goethe Institute screened 25 documentaries on human rights in universities across Pakistan.

75. The information centre in Tokyo has a long-standing relationship with Yoshimoto Kogyo, Japan's entertainment conglomerate. Together they have launched an innovative Sustainable Development Goals awareness-raising initiative at the Okinawa International Film Festival, held in April, which uses the power of comedy to convey messages about the Goals. The partnership also included a number of Sustainable Development Goal-themed events and activities at the Kyoto International Film and Art Festival in October.

76. In November the information centre in Dakar partnered with a local youth association to broadcast programmes relating to the Sustainable Development Goals on community radio stations and through mobile radio studios in remote areas of the country, facilitating local audience engagement in Diola, French, Fulani and Wolof.

77. During the reporting period, the information centre in Bogota partnered with the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia to translate its *Voces Unidas* radio programme into various indigenous languages on an ongoing basis, broadcasting the programmes across 24 local radio stations and online.

78. The information centre in Washington, D.C., jointly with George Washington University and the Organization of American States, organized an exhibit on the transatlantic slave trade that was followed by the premiere screening of the film *Familiar Faces Unexpected Places: A Global African Diaspora*.

79. Through media partnerships, information centres also helped to amplify the call of the Secretary-General for prevention and accountability to build and sustain peace and security. For example, the information centre in Cairo translated and disseminated

key materials on the visit of the Secretary-General to the Central African Republic, which resulted in increased media pick-up and local audience engagement.

80. Some information centres established new or maintained existing partnerships with local radio and television stations to promote the Sustainable Development Goals and other key United Nations initiatives and messages locally. For example:

(a) The information centre in Beirut teamed up with the Lebanese radio station Sawt Lubnan and the television station Tele Liban to promote the Goals;

(b) The information centre in Pretoria worked with Radio Islam, a community radio station in Johannesburg, to produce a weekly programme entitled "UN Report";

(c) The information centre in Bogota worked with the State-owned national broadcaster RTVC Sistema de Medios Públicos to air United Nations programmes on a weekly basis across 51 radio frequencies;

(d) The information centre in Islamabad, together with Radio Pakistan, is broadcasting a "UN Perspective" programme on 64 AM and FM channels across 95 per cent of the territory, reaching 98 per cent of the population;

(e) The information centre in Lagos partnered with Radio Nigeria to air a weekly 15-minute programme on the work of the United Nations in Nigeria and the Sustainable Development Goals, with the potential to reach a Yoruba-speaking audience of 40 million.

E. Outreach to young people

81. Model United Nations programmes remain effective in engaging with young people on issues of global concern. In November the Department organized an online briefing on managing Model United Nations programmes for participants from 23 information centres to promote knowledge-sharing and strengthen programme delivery. In 2017, 21 centres organized Model United Nations conferences, with some 12,000 students participating. Supported by the information centre in Bogota, the Model United Nations in Colombia, held in November, involved 2,800 students and 300 teachers from more than 200 schools. The information centre in Dhaka, together with national university partners, mobilized 450 student delegates to participate in a four-day-long Model United Nations in December on key issues, including the Sustainable Development Goals, the Rohingya crisis and migration.

82. During the reporting period, information centres organized many other outreach activities to promote the work and priorities of the United Nations to young people. For example:

(a) The information centre in Kathmandu engaged 800 schoolchildren in the Kathmandu Valley on the issue of gender-based violence;

(b) The information centre in New Delhi, together with an association of 160 senior secondary schools across India and a private sector company, mobilized more than 1,000 students from 15 New Delhi schools to participate in a silent march to protest air pollution and climate change. The march was a culmination of a student-led campaign in which students visited the sites of major sources of air pollution in the city. A press conference by student reporters about their experiences and possible solutions to the problem was covered extensively in local and international media;

(c) For United Nations Day, on 24 October, the information centre in Accra, jointly with the United Nations country team, the Ghanaian foreign ministry and the

Ghana United Nations Students Association, organized three days of outreach to high school students in eastern Ghana, designating student advocates to promote the Sustainable Development Goals;

(d) The information centre in Lusaka promoted the Sustainable Development Goals to 250 young people from all provinces of Zambia, who participated in an inaugural national youth conference on the Sustainable Development Goals in Southern Africa;

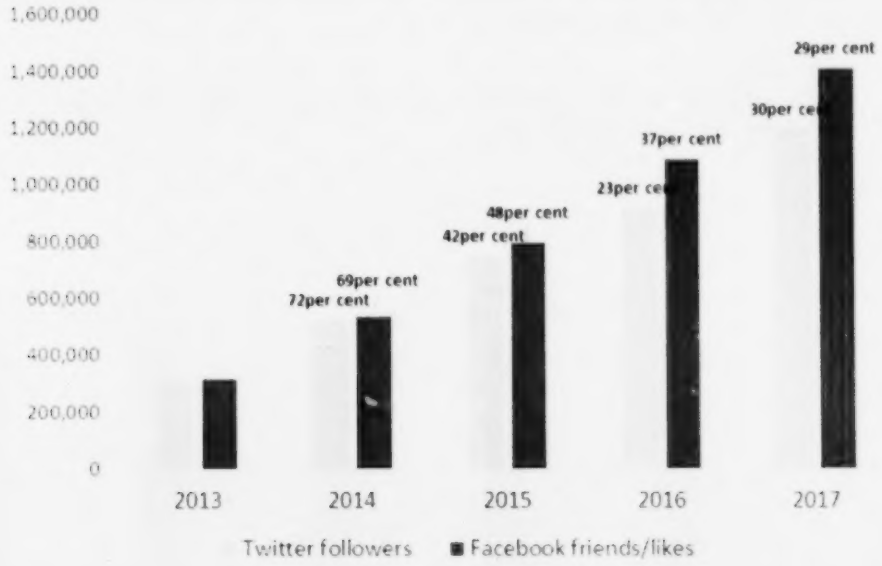
(e) The information centre in Rabat promoted the first Twitter chat of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth to Moroccan youth in October;

(f) The information centre in Tehran engaged more than 1,500 young people on the work of the United Nations during the Fourth International Youth and Wealth Creation Symposium, organized by the Isfahan Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture.

83. The increasing use by information centres of social media platforms in addition to more traditional platforms has helped to amplify the message of the Organization worldwide, especially to youth (see figure I).

Figure I

Twitter followers and Facebook likes of United Nations information centres and their percentage increase, 2013–2017



F. Measuring impact

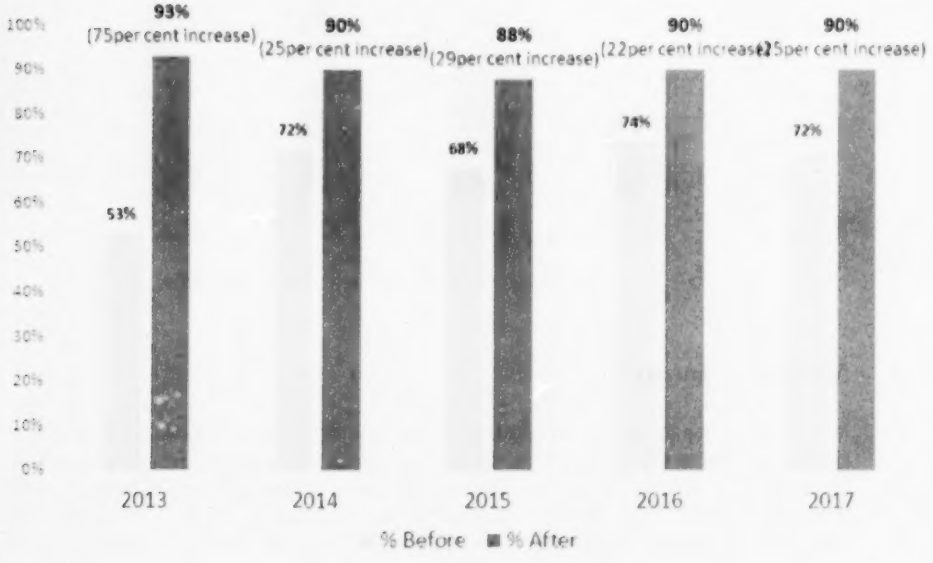
84. As the Department is monitoring its work with a new emphasis on coherence, clarity and impact, it is increasingly relying on its information centres to provide feedback on local responses to United Nations communications campaigns and initiatives. Monitoring and evaluating press coverage is a way to gauge the effectiveness of the Department's media campaigns. The regular conduct of such

analyses allows for comparisons across communications campaigns and enables greater organizational learning. It also permits the Department to evaluate its ability to convey messages, address or counter incorrect messages and generate favourable coverage. Such analyses provide insights leading to improved decision-making and performance. In support of those activities, in 2017 the information centres provided in-depth analyses of 2,500 media articles. Those analyses were used to provide feedback on specific communications campaigns, such as that for the Ocean Conference, held in New York in June, on which information centres provided coverage from 70 countries in 24 languages, and feedback for the Secretary-General and his team, on, for example, the media impact of his missions to specific countries and regions. They have also made possible a comparative analysis of the impact of the Secretary-General's New Year's message from year to year.

85. Collecting feedback directly from end users allows the Department to measure the usefulness, relevance and reach of its products and activities and assess how its stakeholders are making use of its services. In 2017 the information centres collected feedback from over 6,000 briefing participants. More than 90 per cent of participants said the briefings had improved their understanding of the work and issues of the United Nations. More importantly, such information centre programmes are significantly improving support for the United Nations. In a comparison of opinions about the United Nations before and after participation in a centre programme, almost twice as many participants rated their opinion of the United Nations as "very positive", and the number of participants with a negative view of the Organization dropped by 55 per cent (see figure II).

Figure II

Positive opinion of the United Nations before and after information centre briefings, 2013–2017 (percentage)



G. Conclusion

86. Against the backdrop of what the Secretary-General has described as a "world in reverse", the Department of Public Information has launched a number of communications campaigns, including the revitalized umbrella campaign entitled "Sustainable Development Goals: 17 Goals to transform our world", a campaign to promote the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Climate Action campaign in the lead-up to the Secretary-General's 2019 climate summit, the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls, a campaign to draw attention to the service and sacrifice of peacekeeping troops and a campaign to support the negotiations on global compacts on migration and refugees.

87. The key communications objectives are being rolled out with an emphasis on clear and consistent branding; storytelling that captures newsier, more human-centred content; impact measurement to track results more effectively; and using digitally driven content to reach the global public, in particular, the young, on the platforms on which they are consuming information.

88. The communications campaigns are aimed at improving coherence across the United Nations system through the coordination platform of the United Nations Communications Group both at Headquarters and at the country level, as led by the Department.

89. The United Nations information centres play a key role in the implementation of campaigns and outreach. The Department will continue to strengthen their capacities, enhance coordination and interaction with field offices and create synergies to revitalize and reposition information centres to better respond to the ever-changing communications landscape and to ongoing reform initiatives.